

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil

Web: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Soldiers compete in regional Best Warrior Competition

By Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen
SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The best enlisted Soldier and noncommissioned officer from eight states competed in the National Guard Bureau's Region 6 Best Warrior Competition hosted by the South Dakota National Guard, May 19-21, in Rapid City and throughout the Black Hills.

Sixteen Guardsmen competed in a variety of mentally and physically demanding events designed to challenge the toughest of Soldiers. The contestants competed for the ultimate title, to be named as either the region's Soldier or Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

Events included written exams, battle drills, M-16 rifle marksmanship, land navigation, an obstacle course, a 10.8-mile road march and a physical fitness test. Soldiers earned points for each event with the highest point earners in each competition advancing to represent the region at the national competition.

"The Best Warrior competition is not necessarily about being the best at everything, but it's about being the best overall Soldier," said SDARNG State Command Sgt. Maj. Susan Shoe. "It is impressive to see the caliber of Soldiers competing here and testing their Army values and Warrior ethos."

"When a Soldier was challenged with a task, it was common to see the competitors encourage each other, living up to the Warrior Ethos – 'I will always place the mission first, I will never accept defeat, I will never quit, I will never leave a fallen comrade'", said Shoe.

Last year's Region 6 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Carver, Oregon ARNG explained what it takes to win.

"You have to be well-rounded," said Carver. "You have guys in this competition who are athletic, but their soldiering skills are not up to par and vice versa. It takes a balance of both to win."

In addition to being physically fit and technically proficient, you have to have an internal drive to persevere through the fast-paced, exhausting three days of constantly being physically and mentally tested, said Carver.

Speaking from experience, Carver said he believes that participating in the Best Warrior Competition develops a Soldier into a better leader.

"I can guarantee these Soldiers will walk away better leaders," he said. "They will be more technically and physically sound, due to the amount of preparation it takes to compete. Studying Army leadership

manuals for months will result in the information being engrained and that will make them be more effective as leaders.”

Spc. Dalton DeBoer, SDARNG contestant, of Clear Lake, S.D., testified to the amount of studying required.

“There is a lot of information to study and be tested on,” said DeBoer. “Being in this competition motivated me to study warrior tasks that I haven’t used in a while.”

Not only will the participants leave this competition as better leaders, they are also a source of inspiration for Soldiers in their home state, said Carver.

The NCO who claimed this year’s Region 6 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year title was Sgt. 1st Class Scott Stimpson, from the Oregon ARNG. Staff Sgt. Sam Schaefer, SDARNG, of Watertown, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, finished as the runner-up.

Spc. David Notti, Montana ARNG, won the title of Region 6 Soldier of the Year. Spc. Elijah Putnam, Idaho ARNG, finished as the runner-up.

Stimpson and Notti edged out 14 other Soldiers from Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota and North Dakota and will advance to compete at the national level competition at Camp Robinson in Little Rock, Arkansas in July.

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard



140520-Z-WA247-057: Spc. Dalton DeBoer, of Clear Lake, S.D., a member of South Dakota Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, participates in the obstacle course during the National Guard Bureau Region 6 Best Warrior Competition at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., May 20, 2014. Soldiers also participated in written exams, battle drills, M-16 rifle marksmanship, land navigation, a 10.8-mile road march and a physical fitness test. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald/RELEASED)



140520-Z-CW157-001: Spc. David Notti, Montana Army National Guard, places a mask on Sgt. Taylor Jans, South Dakota ARNG, in a nuclear, biological and chemical warrior task lane during the National Guard Bureau Region 6 Best Warrior Competition at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., May 20, 2014. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st. Class Theanne Tangen/RELEASED)



140520-CW157-003: Spc. Dalton DeBoer, of Clear Lake, S.D., a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, aims an M-9 pistol during the National Guard Bureau Region 6 Best Warrior Competition at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., May 20, 2014. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st. Class Theanne Tangen/RELEASED)



140521-Z-CW157-002: Washington Army National Guard Sgt. Kenneth Pfeifle (left), Sgt. 1st Class Scott Stimpson, Oregon ARNG and Staff Sgt. Trampas Vojtasek, Alaska ARNG, carry 40 pounds of gear, along with their M-16 rifles, during a 10.8-mile road march along the South Dakota George S. Mickelson Trail for the National Guard Bureau Region 6 Best Warrior Competition, May 21, 2014. The march is an individual event to see who finishes first, but these three Soldiers stayed together throughout the march to motivate each other. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen/RELEASED)



140521-Z-CW157-009: Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the South Dakota National Guard's adjutant general, and SDARNG State Command Sgt. Maj. Susan Shoe award Spc. Elijah Putnam, Idaho ARNG, with a plaque for placing runner up in the Region 6 Soldier of the Year category during the National Guard Bureau Region 6 Best Warrior Competition at Fort Meade, S.D., May 21, 2014. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen/RELEASED)



140521-Z-CW157-018: Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the South Dakota National Guard's adjutant general, awards Staff Sgt. Sam Schaefer, of Watertown, S.D., a member of the SDARNG's 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, with a plaque for earning the title of Noncommissioned Officer of the Year runner-up during the National Guard Bureau Region 6 Best Warrior Competition at Fort Meade, S.D., May 21, 2014. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen/RELEASED)



140521-Z-CW157-006: Sgt. 1st Class Scott Stimpson, Oregon Army National Guard (left), won the title of Region 6 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Montana Army National Guard Spc. David Notti earned Region 6 Soldier of the Year during the National Guard Bureau Region 6 Best Warrior Competition at Fort Meade, S.D., May 21, 2014. Stimpson and Notti competed against 14 other Soldiers from Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota and North Dakota and will advance to the national competition at Camp Robinson in Little Rock, Ark., in July. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen/RELEASED)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Maj. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil